

what are the design guidelines?

The design guidelines are standards, created jointly by a neighborhood and the MHZC, which are used in determining the architectural compatibility of proposed projects. They provide direction for project applicants and ensure that the decisions of the MHZC are not arbitrary. The guidelines assure that new construction and additions are sympathetic to the character of a neighborhood, and restrict the loss of architecturally contributing buildings.

By state and local law, all guidelines must be in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings — design principles used by private and public preservation agencies throughout the country.

points to remember

Free architectural guidance is readily available from the MHZC staff. Working with them from the beginning saves time and ensures that plans will not have to be changed later to meet the guidelines.

The MHZC only reviews exterior plans which are visible from public rights-of-way. Interiors are not reviewed.

Conservation zoning does not force property owners to work on, repair, or maintain their homes; it responds to projects initiated by the owner.

Like the building code requirements, work done in violation of the design guidelines is required to be corrected and may be subject to fines.

The MHZC maintains a library of materials on architectural history, restoration techniques and products for rehabilitation which is available to the public. Staff frequently provides recommendations to property owners for aspects of restoration which are not regulated by conservation zoning.

metropolitan historic zoning commission

an agency of Metropolitan Government
of Nashville and Davidson County

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Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 862-7970
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The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission and conservation zoning regulations are established pursuant to Chapter 17.102 of the Zoning Ordinance for Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County.



For assistance call 862-7970.

a tool to
preserve
neighborhoods
and to protect
Nashville's
architectural
heritage

conservation zoning

what is conservation zoning?

Conservation zoning is a tool to protect the architectural character of Nashville's historic neighborhoods by managing growth and change. It is an overlay zoning, applying in addition to the base or land-use zoning of an area. The process of acquiring conservation zoning is initiated by neighborhood residents. After extensive public input, an area may be designated a *neighborhood conservation zoning district* by the Metropolitan Council through adoption of a zoning ordinance.

Conservation zoning protects a district from the loss of architecturally or historically important buildings, new construction not in character with the neighborhood, and additions to buildings that would lessen their architectural importance.

These goals are accomplished by requiring that plans for **demolition, new construction, additions** and **relocation** be reviewed by an architectural review board, the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC). The MHZC reviews these projects according to a set of design guidelines approved by the neighborhood prior to the designation of the overlay zoning district.

how does conservation zoning work?

If your property is in a neighborhood conservation zoning district and you are planning to

- > **demolish** a building;
- > **construct** a new building;
- > **add** to an existing building (enclose a porch, add a roof dormer — anything that increases habitable space); or
- > **move** a building;

one step is added to getting a building permit for the work: you must first obtain a preservation permit from the MHZC.

how do i get a preservation permit?

1. Call the MHZC at 862-7970 to obtain an application for a preservation permit and to make an appointment to meet with the staff.

Staff members will meet with you at your house to discuss your project, answer any questions about conservation zoning, and advise you as to whether or not your plans will meet the design guidelines. The staff can guide you in making your plans meet the guidelines and will provide free design advice on request.

Copies of the design guidelines are available through the office of the MHZC.

When you submit your completed application, the staff will determine whether a preservation permit can be issued immediately or if the work requires referral to the commission (see chart below).

If the work requires referral to the commission, a meeting will be called within fifteen (15) working days. Regular meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday of every month.

2. Take the preservation permit to the Metropolitan Department of Codes Administration.

Officials at Codes will review your plans for compliance with regular zoning and building code regulations — applicable whether or not your property is in a neighborhood conservation zoning district.

Permit fees (amount charged depends on the type and value of the work to be done) will be charged to you then. There is no fee for a preservation permit. The Codes Department is located on the second floor of the Metro Howard Office Building at 700 Second Avenue North.

For preservation permits and building permits to remain valid, work must begin within six (6) months of the date of issue.

preservation permits and building permits required

type of work	preservation permit required		building permit required issued by Codes
	reviewed by staff	reviewed by MHZC	
New construction			
Primary building	yes	yes	yes
Secondary building (garage, shed, etc.)	yes	yes	yes ¹
Addition (adding a room or dormer, enclosing a porch, etc.)	yes ²	yes	yes
Demolition (in whole or part)	yes ³	yes	yes
Relocation	yes	yes	yes

1. If built on site or portable and more than 100 square feet. 2. Staff may issue preservation permits for additions to non-historic buildings. 3. Staff may issue preservation permits for demolition of non-historic secondary buildings.